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ABSTRACT

After introductory material warning that the unique circumstances surrounding a college may prohibit it from replicating the administrative tactics of another institution, this paper describes the management and administrative organization of Austin Community College's (ACC's) decentralized adult education program. A brief description of ACC is presented first, which examines ACC's utilization of dispersed governmental and private facilities in lieu of a college-owned campus; the organization of ACC's administrative staff; and the characteristics of ACC's largely adult student population. The remainder of the paper then discusses the management of ACC's Community Campus, which, under the central leadership of an Executive Dean, provides vocational and adult continuing education at 56 locations through three administrative units. These three units are: (1) the Adult Basic Education Program, which offers courses in citizenship, high school equivalency, and English as a Second Language; (2) the Continuing Education Program, which provides instruction in the areas of vocational skills, licensure, and avocational interests; and (3) Business, Industrial, and Government Training Programs, which oversee cooperative education. For each of these units, the paper describes funding sources, responsibilities of unit administrators, provisions for site supervision, and techniques used to publicize and market the unit's courses. (JP)

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ADMINISTERING ADULT EDUCATION--A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH

A PANEL REPORT PRESENTED

TO

THE COLLEGE BOARD

SOUTHWESTERN REGIONAL

MAKING-IT WORKSHOP

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

MAY 4-5, 1981

BY

RAMON H. DOVALINA

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ADMINISTERING ADULT EDUCATION--A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH

I. INTRODUCTION

Good Morning! It is indeed a pleasure to be with you today and share the podium with Dr. Hatfield and Dr. Spikes. Tom, as you know, was President of ACC before going to our satellite institution in Austin. As Dean of Continuing Education, Tom is our competition to some extent, so I'll be careful in giving you some insight into our operations so as not to disclose our trade secrets.

I've been asked to speak on administering Adult Education--A Community Based Approach. I've always said that circumstances dictate the game plan--you've got to play with what you have. The circumstances at our institution dictate that we have decentralized community-based programs with centralized administrative control. We organize, manage, and administer programs throughout the Travis County area from one central location.

II. ACC* IN GENERAL

ACC is a very unique institution and the circumstances that we have may not be found in your organization. However, the solutions we have found and the success experienced in serving adults may be what you are looking for.

What are the circumstances that make ACC different? All but two community colleges in the state have taxing authority. All but two own the physical facilities they use. All but two are independent of the local school district. In all three cases, ACC is one of the two exceptions.

Consequently, ACC does not have its own campus--it relies on the school districts, the city, business and industry, state buildings, hospitals, libraries, recreation centers, churches, and so on for space. Generally, these locations are not large enough to accommodate comprehensive programs and, generally, the locations are available only in the evening. We were lucky that when the College first opened its doors in 1973 a high school building which had been closed for desegration purposes was made available to us. In 1975, another high school was abandoned by the school district and leased to us. Our association with the school district had given us access to two other high schools in the evening and an agreement with the City of Austin provided the College with an Allied Health Building. These 5 main sites provide the focus for the College's general administrative structure.

*Austin Community College

III. ACC GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The structure calls for the President and two Vice-Presidents and three Executive Deans reporting to him. The V-Ps are staff officers--one for district-wide academic and student services, the other for district-wide administrative services. The three Executive Deans are responsible for line function operations. Basically, the City is divided in half. All college-credit programs on the east side of Austin are the responsibility of one Executive Dean and those on the west side to the second Executive Dean. The third campus is the community campus and I'll get to it later.

What effect does a community-based college-credit program with a heavy emphasis on evening classes have? it becomes more accessible to the adults.

.ACC students are older than the traditional college student with 14.8% being 31-40 years of age and 8.1% over 41.

.The percentage of women enrolled continues to increase. Women now represent 50.3 percent.

.The demand for evening classes is great. 36% of our students are evening only and 26% are day and evening.

.ACC is a working persons college. More than 70% of our students are employed and 74% of these work more than 30 hours a week.

IV. COMMUNITY CAMPUS

Let me get now to the Community Campus. By law the legal purposes of a community college include to provide:

1. Vocational programs leading directly to employment in semi-skilled and skilled occupations and

2. Continuing adult education for occupational or cultural enhancement.

ACC seeks to fulfill those purposes by providing:

1. Technical programs of varying length, leading to certificates; and occupationally-oriented programs, designed to train students for skilled employment.

2. Adult continuing education, in credit and non-credit courses, designed for updating, upgrading, retraining or training for new career purposes.

3. Avocational, cultural, and public service programs, offered in special response to community interest and need, designed for improvement of the individual, and the quality of life in general.

4. Adult Basic Education for those adults who wish to learn to speak English, complete requirements for a high school equivalency certificate, or improve their educational backgrounds.

These services are provided in the Community Campus. As Executive Dean for the Community Campus, I have the responsibility for these programs. Last Fall we had 272 staff and faculty members and only one of those faculty members was full-time. We served over 8,000 students. And we did this in 56 locations in Travis County. How can you administer such a program? We have the programs divided into three areas--Adult Basic Education, Continuing Education, and Business, Industrial and Governmental Training Programs. As I talk about the management of each one, I will also discuss some of the nuts and bolts of the operations.

V. ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

ACC is the prime sponsor for the Travis County Co-op and is funded by State and Federal funds through TEA*. This year funding went a little over one-half million dollars. ABE has a Coordinating Committee composed of representatives from the public educational institutions and an advisory committee composed of lay persons in the county. The functions of the committees are to make recommendations and assist in the development and carrying out of a plan for a coordinated approach to needs assessment, resource identification, establishment of priorities, program operation, and operation evaluation.

The College administers the program--we are fiscally and administratively responsible. Reporting directly to me is the Coordinator of Adult Basic Education. Second in the pecking order is the Program Supervisor. The division of work between these two individuals is basically between staff and line. The Coordinator takes care of the books and the Supervisor takes care of the people.

This year we have 16 different sites providing instruction in 5 related subprograms:

- Citizenship Training
- Basic Education through the 8th grade level
- G.E.D. preparation from the 9th to 12th grade level
- English as a Second Language and
- APL instruction

*Texas Education Agency

Now, its obvious that the Program Supervisor can't be in 16 different locations but each site is tied in to some administrator at the site. As an example, we use 5 community schools and, for day to day supervision, the instructors are assigned to the community school administrator. Some sites have contained populations such as the Travis County Jail, the Austin State Hospital and Texas Rehabilitation Center. Again in each of these cases there is a tie-in with some training officer who is responsible. Our sites also include a labor union hall, 4 college campus sites, 2 churches and a community center.

The ABE Program is very easy to market:

- There is no tuition.
- The multiple sites provide accessability.
- The hours of operation are ideal with 4 day sites, 2 day-evening sites, and 10 evening only locations.
- The tie-ins with other programs, locations and confined groups provide built-in clientele.
- Brochures on ESL and ABE are available throughout the community.
- We get a lot of public-service announcements on radio and television.
- We are about to get into GTE's Info Center which is a telephone call-in tape system. This tape would give a short plug on the program characteristics and its availability.
- Program information is printed along with the rest of the college schedule.

Let me add that tonight is the College graduation ceremony. Our G.E.D. graduates participate along with the Associate Degree graduates. 439 students will receive their high school equivalency making it the 2nd largest high school graduating class in the county. Their ages range from 18 to 74. Their treatment as any other College student promotes their continuation into the College-Degree program. 6.4% of our College-Credit students were admitted on the basis of their G.E.D. completion.

VI. CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Coordinator of Continuing Education is responsible for this program. She has two assistants--one for Adult Vocational Programs and the other for Community Service or Avocational courses.

The Adult Vocational Administrator is responsible for courses that are job-training oriented and designed to meet a variety of vocational training needs, including developing skills for entry level employment or job advancement and satisfying educational requirements for licensing purposes. This

includes courses in Agriculture and Homemaking, Health Occupations, Real Estate, Office Occupations and Industrial Technical Education.

The Administrator of Community Service courses is responsible; not only for offering avocational opportunities to learn for personal growth, development, and enjoyment; but for a Lifelong Learning program co-sponsored by the College and the Austin Institute of Lifetime Learning. Lifelong Learning seeks to provide instruction and guidance in retirement living for all Seniors over 55. Courses are designed to help Seniors develop life-coping skills and avocational interests for personal growth and development.

Because adult vocational courses generally require some kind of lab or workshop-type facility these courses were only offered in 12 locations. Community-service courses, however, were offered in 22 locations and Lifelong Learning in 12 additional sites.

Generally, there is site supervision from the Agency, organization or whatever activity normally takes place at the site. Otherwise, the administrator visits each class at least once during the enrollment period. The only additional assistance, in so far as management is concerned and besides the Coordinator and the two Assistants, is from the Director of the Austin Institute of Lifetime Learning for his programs.

With the exception of the Lifelong Program too, these 3 administrators are responsible for course selection, course scheduling, hiring faculty, registration, obtaining supplies and equipment, arranging for cooperative agreements with the site administrator, class rolls, program and faculty evaluation, and so on.

Like Adult Basic Education, the programs are popular among adults because of the accessability, variety of courses and the availability of instruction in the evening. Other methods of marketing include:

- The schedule of continuing education courses is printed along with the rest of the college-credit courses. This schedule is mailed to every household in Travis County and the Southern part of Williamson County.
- The use of community professionals, many of whom are household names in their field, attracts many students.
- When new or interesting courses are offered, news releases are sent to the local media.
- Newspaper advertisements are used to a great extent during peak periods of registration.

- Special mail outs are very important. As an example, the names and addresses of every nursery, florist, landscaper and so on are in a word processing unit. Each semester a listing of courses related to those businesses is mailed to them along with a personal letter. The same is done for six other similar listings.

- The registration system is very flexible. Students can register by mail or in person at 4 different locations. We are in an on-line computer system, by the way, and all registration is by remote-entry via CRTs.

- Many courses, because of their uniqueness, can be marketed in other ways.

  - Cooking classes in the food section of the paper.
  - Real Estate courses in the real estate section.
  - Dance, Physical and Recreational courses in the amusement section.
  - The Flower Arranging course will do a class project such as a wedding.
  - For Defensive Driving, our most successful avocational course, we send extra copies of that schedule to the traffic judges and they are very cooperative in passing that information to the offenders. The City has printed Defensive Driving information on the back of each citation and the insurance companies mail our schedules to their car insurance clients. For the last 3 years, ACC has received the National Safety Council Award for training the most students for DDC in a community college in the country.

VII. BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT

This is our newest area of concentration. For a long time we had a Coordinator of Cooperative Education that worked primarily with Industrial Start-Up programs funded through the Industrial Commission and TEA, and with coop students who work full-time in industry and register for college-credit courses in the evening under some kind of tuition-assistance program funded by their employer. Last year, we employed an Assistant Dean and this year added two Program Developers.

Now, the Assistant Dean reports to me, and the Coordinator and two Program Specialists work for the Assistant Dean. These three latter administrators work together as a team but generally one works with industry, one with business, and the other with government. Each has a background in their work concentration area. As an example, the individual working with governmental agencies was the head of a State Department until his retirement and can open doors at the top of the State heirarchy that no one else can.

- That direct contact is above all, the most important marketing technique. You have to visit that business or industry, become familiar with the operation, and find out about their needs. Don't stick to the training or personnel head. Visit with the operations chief, too.

- When you can, hire as a faculty member someone from within the employer's organization.

- Don't commit yourself to a course or promise anything that you can't do better than they can for themselves. If you do you'll bomb out and never get back in.

- When its an expanding or new industry; work with your CETA program, SER, Texas Employment Commission, the College's Student Placement and Financial Aid Officers, and other such agencies in recruiting students for your classes and potential employees for the company.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Taking everything into consideration, I wouldn't wish a decentralized operation on anyone but, then again, I wouldn't trade it either. It works for us because of the centralized control and the people who manage it. I could write all our procedures and policies, about all of our techniques, and about all our trade secrets and ship them to a similar location under similar circumstances and it wouldn't work. Why? Because of the players involved. The team members are assigned their responsibilities based on their strengths. I have no qualms about re-assigning programs based on my players' strengths or weaknesses.

Finally, have clear lines of responsibility and give your staff the authority to carry out these responsibilities. Keep the lines of communication open and the bureaucracy to a minimum.